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General and complete disarmament: observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum*

Contents

Page

II. Replies received from Governments 2

Finland 2

* The information in the present document was received after the submission of the main report.

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II. Replies received from Governments

Finland

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1. Finland continues to support and actively promote the issue raised at the General Assembly of considering environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements related to disarmament and arms control. Recognition of the interconnection of environmental protection and disarmament and arms control is of utmost importance and merits increased attention. An active dialogue between civil society, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community and civil and military authorities continues to take place nationally in Finland.

2. In order to facilitate implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, Finland continues to contribute to the destruction of chemical weapon stockpiles in the Russian Federation. Help is provided by Finland as part of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction of the Group of Eight. In the period 2000 to 2003, Finnish support totalling €993,000 was used to set up an environmental monitoring network at the chemical weapons destruction facilities in Gorny and Kambarka, Russian Federation. In 2005 and 2006, Finland supported international outreach activities by non-governmental organizations with €325,000 to the Green Cross (Switzerland and the Russian Federation). Most recently, in 2008 Finland committed an additional €715,000 to support chemical weapon destruction by the Russian Federation at the Shchuch'ye plant, in cooperation with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In addition, activities by non-governmental organizations aimed at facilitating safe and environmentally sound chemical weapon destruction and public outreach continues with some €190,000 donated in 2008 to the Green Cross. Finland's support to the Global Partnership initiative has also extended to the nuclear field, where important synergies between environmental goals and objectives related to security and non-proliferation can be gained. Besides contributing €2 million to the nuclear-related activities of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership in the period 2002 to 2006 and €1.5 million to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund in the period 2003 to 2007, Finland finances long-term cooperation projects, notably in the fields of nuclear waste management, nuclear material safeguards and nuclear power plant safety in North-Western Russian Federation.

3. The Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention is Finland's national authority for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and one of the world's leading laboratories in the field of chemical weapons identification and analysis. Environmental issues are integrated into the research and teaching programmes of the Institute. Teaching on verification of chemical weapons is predominantly offered to professionals from developing countries. Decontamination, including its environmental aspects, has been one of the research topics on which the Institute has cooperated with the Technical Research Centre of the Finnish Defence Forces. The Institute has also done research related to chemical weapons dumped in the Baltic Sea, which is known as one of the most polluted sea areas in the world.

4. As regards biological weapons, the National Public Health Institute of Finland and the Finnish Defence Forces established, in 2005, a Centre for Biothreat Preparedness to enhance Finland's capacities to assess, prepare for and respond to biological threats. The Centre participates in Finnish efforts to implement the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. By bringing together civilian and military expertise, the Centre contributes to a comprehensive approach to biological threats, covering both biosafety and biosecurity aspects, and thus enhances synergies between environmental and disarmament objectives.